

1962

DYNAMICS OF GENERAL WAR MID-1967
SOVIET FIRST STRIKE - USIB FORCE
(Illustrative Case)

Time	Action		Cumulative Damage			
	USSR	United States	United States		USSR	
			No. of Weapons	Mortal. (Mils.)	No. of Weapons	Mortal. (Mils.)
0		Bombers alerted and off				
(b)(1)		Medium bombers stage & refuel				
		Bombers exit USSR		Some strategic indication		
				B-52 AA deployed forward; forces peaked		
		Bombers approach contiguous cover, missiles count-down, & launch				
		(b)(1)		Alert take-off		
				Missiles countdown		
				Alert off		
		Missiles impact; Military -some UI command/control	→	420		
		Defense suppression SLBM; Bombers penetrate		510		
		Bomber follow-on; Coastal bases/UI		760		
		Execute orders				
		Missiles launched				
		Missiles impact Mil/some UI	→	895		
		(b)(1)	→	1025		
		more missiles impact mainly UI?				

1963 DPM target list for FY 1969 had 533 retaliatory US missiles --> 50 million prompt urban fatalities (in retaliation). No fallout. Sagan, "Evol US Nuc Doctrine," 34-35. DPM written in December 1963.

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Time	Action		Cumulative Damage			
	USSR	United States	United States		USSR	
			No. of Weapons	Mortal. (Mils.)	No. of Weapons	Mortal. (Mils.)
(b)(1)	Bomber fol- low on; Interior bases/UI	B-52 AA penetrate	860	125		
		(b)(1) penetrate				
		(b)(1) B-52 AA impact			2050	(b)(1)
	Bomber exit					
		B-52 AA exit				
		B-58 penetrate				
		(b)(1) exit				
		B-58 impact			2070	(b)(1)
		B-52 ASMs			2720	
		(b)(1)				
		B-52 & (b)(1)				
		(b)(1)			3485	
		B-58 exit				
		(b)(1) recovery (?)				
		B-52 exit				
	Bomber recovery(?)	B-58 recovery (?)				
		B-52 recovery (?)				
	Commitment of Recyclable Forces					

very close to 3,500 in Rosenberg, "Origins Overkill": corresponds closely to Kaysen in Kaplan's Atlantic article of 4,423 nuclear weapons against 1,099 mil & urban targets throughout Sino-Sov bloc

Kaysen to Taylor 19610906 in Burr briefing book: full force expected to kill 54% Sov pop, 71% urban pop. Ellsberg says 275 immediate deaths Sino-Sov bloc. "Planning for 100 Holocausts," September 16, 2009 ellberg.net

Date: March 9, 1962

Thursday September 3, 2009

Some questions for Dan

As I listened to our conversation, a number of questions came to mind. Basically, the experience you had in regards to the SIOP is extraordinary—both your knowledge and your perspective. I very much hope that you will soon do a blog entry that lays out your experience writing the guidance, what you saw that led you to write the guidance the way you did, what you hoped to accomplish, and how you judge the result. (As I recall, you said in our conversation that you didn't know how much the guidance actually influenced what was in the war plan itself. Elaborate!)

One thing I'm particularly interested in re the guidance: the formula we see in SIOP-63—“(1) To destroy or neutralize the military capabilities of the enemy while retaining ready, effective and controlled U.S. strategic capabilities adequate to assure, to the maximum extent possible, retention of U.S. military superiority to the enemy, or any potential enemies, at any point during or after the war. (2) To minimize damage to the U.S. and its Allies, and in all events to limit such damage to a level consistent with national survival and independence. (3) To bring the war to an end on the most advantageous terms for U.S. and its Allies.” (From Burr's briefing book)—what can you tell me about this language? I presume you wrote it or something close to it. How did you come up with it?

As part of the guidance and implementation of SIOP-63 planning, what you can tell us about who knew what will be very important and I'm sure fascinating—both who knew what at JSTPS and who knew what at high political levels. My sense is that these are different worlds with different sensibilities and to the degree that you can sketch them out, it will help readers to understand one of the great danger points for American democracy (never mind the fate of the world!).

Also, your take on some major personalities—the way you did it in *Secrets* worked very well—will also be a significant contribution. I'm particularly interested in what you thought about Herman Kahn, partly because the interesting biography of him, Ghamari-Tabrizi's *The Worlds of Herman Kahn*, suggested to me that he may have been manic, though she studiously avoids explicit psychological discussion. Was it your sense that he was? Or bi-polar? Just between us. Also, where did you and Kaufman agree and disagree? You and Harry? How did you understand the small world of nuclear strategists you were part of? Divisions? Agreements? Also, what did you think of Kissinger? Some of this, and more, you can easily work into substantive blog entries you're already thinking about. The world of nuclear strategists and the environment at RAND might well be its own entry.

But your take on people, as fascinating as I think it will be, is not where my own main questions for you lie, which has to do with your experience with and knowledge of the guidance and SIOP process. Here are some further questions.

1) I'm terribly curious about this: What did the SIOP itself look like?!!! Burr says it was basically a set of timing sheets. What did it look like when you saw it? Physically what was it? A set of pages or printouts? What physical size were the sheets? How many? Was this basically a banker's box or file drawer or file cabinet size? How was it organized? Obviously, I'm all ears here and I think many readers will be interested. And I do think it's important historically to get a good description of it, and there isn't one as far as I know.

2) Damage limitation: It looks like the term was in use from the first SIOP. Do you know when the term first came into use? Or when you first heard it? What precisely did it mean—or I should say, what did it mean to whom? I know that when Glenn Kent used it (did he coin?), he meant counterforce, air defense, and civil defense. But Russell Dougherty told me it really was a way—my paraphrase—to make counterforce palatable. His words:

Glenn Kent, he was working up at DDR&E, and Glenn Kent came up with a phrase called damage limitation. And Glenn and I damn well knew what he was saying, he was saying we're going to limit damage to the United States, ergo, we're going to strike his weapons. We're going to hit his sub pens, we're going to hit his silos, we're going to hit his nuclear storage sites, we're going to limit damage to the United States. Now, we didn't have enough weapons then. We later got more and more and more, and mainly began to try to limit damage to Europe. And then we tried to do some blunting targeting against his general purpose forces. And as we can do more and more, we finally got to where we can do a lot of blunting, and we did.... We're talking about the sixties, through the seventies. (Dougherty, interview with Eden, October 30, 1987)

Your thoughts? And especially on this: if by the late 1960s, damage limitation, whether first or even second strike became a chimera, who understood this? McNamara presumably. What about other civilian planners? What about SAC? I recall that in our conversation you said that it becomes a sick joke, totally illusory, totally infeasible. Of course I agree. *But* how do you think SAC thought about it? How do you think the colonels sitting in the basement at Omaha thought about it? Do you think they still think that way?

3) Okay, here's a series of hypotheses (not stated as such) and questions re the nuclear war planning process. As you know better than I, much of the war planning process is focused on target coverage. In theory, we should expect that the timing vis-à-vis a Soviet launch would be utterly explicit and clear, and would change target coverage depending on timing. (If we're going first, then should go for all the silos; if we're going

second, go for something else.) But my understanding—and I could be wrong—is as follows.

a) Target coverage doesn't look so different under different timing options, at least not for the nuclear counterforce option. At the point at which we'd launch we didn't have good enough intelligence to know what was in silos or not. And we have an elaborate justification about getting their second strike weapons held in reserve if they have any, and re-load capacity. So, target coverage is largely static (entirely so?) and does not tell much (anything?) about timing.

b) Target coverage is what most of the discussion focuses on, whether in public, SIOP-sensitive material briefings, and possibly even among most of those involved in the mechanics of nuclear targeting.

c) This means that the question of timing is something *very few* people have any handle on. I have a hunch that targeteers are very clear on the coverage and much less so on the timing. But I don't know this. What do you know? What do you know about how the targeteers you knew thought about timing? And who knew about timing in detail beyond those at JSTPS?

d) Back to damage limitation. Even though there are elaborate rationales for second-strike counterforce, and even though I think target coverage does not in itself indicate timing, is it fair to say that target coverage is planned *as if* it were possible—as it was in the early 1960s—to destroy Soviet missiles and aircraft on the ground before they were launched? In other words, can we make sense of target coverage if we think of it as first-strike, or “very early” retaliation, e.g., launch on warning or the very earliest signs of attack, that it would indeed make sense—granted, horrifically brutal sense—if it were possible to, as General Turgidson said, catch ‘em with their pants down?

e) Is it your sense that many in the Air Force (who? CINCSACs and Air Force officers who are CINCSTRATs, colonels who target, pilots?), do hold out hope that we can meaningfully limit damage?

In other words, I'm trying to make sense of target coverage, the logic of which appears largely to be damage limitation, when in fact we can't meaningfully limit damage. Your take?

4) Here's something I didn't ask about and that really fascinates me. I'm interested in the kinds of jokes, slang, humor, terms, used by those in this business. What comes to mind???

5) I remain fascinated to know more about what you discussed in our conversation on the logic(s) or illogics of planning from escalation of tactical war in Europe—who thought what?—to central strategic nuclear war—who thought what?

6) Finally, for now, I'm not entirely clear on sources for your very important statements on Air Force estimates of targets and how they were highly motivated illusions. I understand that it was crucial for them for the budget—but do you have more information than, say, for example, Rosenberg's account in "Origins of Overkill" of either the estimates themselves or the process by which they arrived at them? Just curious.

Sorry this isn't a little bit more tightly organized, but it's the best I can do right now.

Looking forward to your responses in whatever media or form!

Lynn